John Barbour
4254 Forman Ave.,
Taluca Lake, CA 91602

9/15/91

Dear John,

These years my body is rather slow revving up mornings. Usually when I've made coffee I sit and read but sometimes my mind returns to the day before. It did this morning and as I thought I got the idea about which I write. Without, however, thinking it really through. Actually, the idea persisted though my reading of the Post. So without finishing that I write.

Matt Smith, a bright, pleasant and friendly English professor/ TV producer was here for two days with his daughter/assistant, Joann also bright, pleasant, thoroughly dependable and efficient ~~DAZZZ daughter, Joann~~. He has an idea for a British TV show on the JFK assassination. He is quite familiar with and seemingly strongly devoted to all the conspiracy theories. As you know, I disapprove their being treated as solutions, as inevitably they have been. I do not now think that Matt will but I also do not see him either abandoning them or devoting himself in any way to what is established fact about the assassination or its investigation.

Nonetheless, I tried to help him and think I did. This included speaking to Jim Lesar to suggest ways in which Jim could help him today, when Matt sees Jim before going to Dallas in the morning.

In talking to Jim I learned of some competition you are going to have. Public TV or someone producing for it, I did not ask for details, is going to spend quite a bit of time in researching a spedial, with an expected six months for two people in the AARC's offices and files.

Learning this leads me to conclusions about the thrust of this show. I won't go into details on what I believe unless you want me to. But two things at least are clear to me.

One is that they also will be going with the theories rather than addressing what is factual and beyond reasonable question. The other is that those behind the show and doing it genuinely have this addiction. Perhaps they also think they'll solve the mysteries.

Smith will not be competition for you but this PBS thing will be. And you can beat the pants off them and probably bash their brains in with ease and with a different format that can permit rapidity and factual solidity and I think be more interesting and informative at the same time. Plus with enormously less cost.

What occured to me is foreign to my thinking of the past. In fact, I've refused to do it when propositioned to. A dear friend of my youth pressured me for a long time to write what amounts to an autobiography, mostly on my assassination work and experiences. I have had no interest in this and never did and do not have that kind of ego. I have never sought any personal publicity and have, including recently, refused to appear on TV shows, the most recent Inside Edition. I even refused to be on a Dan Rather special after agreeing to because I could see what they did not, a conflict of interest with Ray, whose investigator I'd been.

I see no point in going into the reasons for my feeling and acting this way, unless you'd like to understand it more.

But I am well aware of what I've done, how I've done it, what it cost us, why I failed when I failed (and given the opportunity I'd probably repeat at least some of these mistakes again!) and, conversely, I think, why I succeeded when I did. I think that at least historically it will be important and is and will be the basic work on this assassination and its investigations.

For context, not because you do not know, I did write the first book on the Warren Report, completed 2/15/65 and first published 8/17/65. It is a basic book and there is not a single error in it except of my jdugement, in the conclusion, in which I then believed that a Congressional investigation could do the job expected of the Commission. It didn't.

What is factual about the assassination and published is close to 100% my work. So also is close to 200% of the debunking of the multitudinous theories presented as solutions.

My FOIA lawsuits were precedental and most numerous and most successful. (200,000-300,000 pp.) They not only brought to light most of the fact, they also showed how the executive agencies worked and failed <u>and why</u>. One led to the 1974 amending of FOIA and that is what opened the files of the FBI, CIA and other such agencies to the degree they have been opened.

There is no significant error in any of my seven books and remarkably few minor errors. They ~~that~~ are not of any consequence at all.

So, I have done what nobody else has done and I've done it with an accuracy not easily exceeded, if equalled, on the most controversial of subjects. Without doubt or measure.

As a result I can speak personally as nobody else can about the facts and about how they were brought to light and over what obstacles and problems and opposition (some fine stuff in this area I've never sued, what the FBI did to Lil and me and how false yet effective it was), what it all means - has meant, means today and can mean in the future.

Mine has been a rather broad and deep study of how our basic institutions worked in time of great stress and since then, as few people realize. But I think you know enough about what I've done to form your own opinion. There is what is quotable on this in the only scholarly bibliography coauthored by Dave Wrone, who I think would also be willing to talk about it, as a local professional historian, which Wrone also is (both dear friends and perhaps prejudiced by this), and this second historian, Dr. Gerald McKnight, can also talk about what it has meant to the young minds in the assassinations course he teaches at local Hood College, where all my records will be and some already are, what they learn from it and how it helps them understand the world into which they'll go on graduation. (I hold two seminars a year there, the first in about a month, on the JFK assassination, this time centering on Oswald. And on this I have rare and unused material that in itself would make a sensationally important book and special.)

So, what came to mind so early this morning is in contradiction to what I've done and

how I've lived - what to now I've refused to do - a first person account.

In arguing its value I restrict myself here to what it can mean for your project if you make it your project.

It will be far and away the least expensive approach you can take. It means using me as the voice, so you don't have to pay anyone for that. It means also least preparation time for you if you are willing to do what I think will work very well, if not better than the usual or what I think is the usual approach, the one PBS is taking.

You'll need no resarch time and no real time to formulate questions if you just videotape as I talk. And this lends itself to having the camera on documents nobody has ever seen in some instances and very few have seen by others, as well as perhaps what I published and was ignored, including by the major media.

If we just talk and ramble, with you directing me from time to time, you'll have a great volume of videotape, probably more than you could use in what I think could evolve and at rather low cost, and what you do not use together with what you would could and I think w would make a successful and significant book.

What I have in mind and hope I suggest sufficiently in what I've said will naturally break into self-standing parts of a series of documentaries.

While I lack the experience to warrant a dependable opinion, based on my other experiences, including in editing, I think the only real problems in the editing will be mostly two in nature, well, perhaps three: what to omit, how to arrange it and where what fits best. If the latter seems like a real problem, I do not think that for the most part it will be becuuse much does fit naturally in more than one area and is not out of place in any into which it does fit.

More than pointing me may well be required of you. I have so much in mind and so much of what is no longer there and I tend to confabulate when I talk, thinking I've said what I have not said, that getting me to fill these gaps may from time to time be nexessary.

I think you know how definitive this can be in content and the significance of that content and how it can, I think would be received.

It will be unique and I think the time has come for a first-person account and that this first-person account can and will be what nobody else in any form of production can equal or approximate in any way.

Remember, you won't even have to script anything. All you need do is decide the areas we'd go into as a minimum and perhaps have questions that should not be ignored. If you later find any have been they can be done easily and fitted in.

So, please think about this and let me know.

Best wishes,

Harold